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ALONE IN AFRICA

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or

Seven Years on the Zambesi,

By

Madame Mathilde Keck (Goy)

•
SECOND EDITION

•
London

James Nisbet & Co., Limited

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INTRODUCTION

IN the year 1886, Mathilde Keck, now Madame Goy, was received as a pupil into the Huguenot Seminary, Wellington, Cape Colony.

Her parents were French missionaries at Mabolela on the Free State border of Basutoland.

They had been pioneers in that part of the country, and had lived for eighteen months in their waggon, until a home could be built. Hardship had only deepened their love for the Basutos and their desire to win them for Christ. Mathilde came to us an earnest Christian with a great desire to devote herself to winning the heathen for the Saviour who was so precious to her own soul.

It was beautiful to watch the deepening and

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strengthening of her Christian life, beautiful to see her among her school-mates, always true to her Lord and Master. The thought of her life-work among the heathen was ever with her, with the desire to embrace every opportunity to fit herself for this work, yet she was always the bright, happy, sparkling school-girl.

She appreciated the Christian life of the Seminary, and the religious teaching of our pastor, Dr. Andrew Murray.

The Lord has led her through deep waters, but they could not quench her love.

She is now in Switzerland for the education of her two little daughters, and, at the urgent request of her friends, has written this little sketch, any profits from which will be used to help her in their education. Mr. Coillard has suggested that when her children no longer require her constant care, she return to the Zambesi and take charge of a school home for the Barotsi girls.

With all the old enthusiasm, but with a

INTRODUCTION

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deeper love, she is looking forward to the day when once more she may bring the glorious light to those who are in great darkness.

We are sure her pathetic story told in her own sweet way will touch many hearts, and show how the love of Christ constraineth.

A. P. FERGUSON,

Principal Huguenot Seminary.

WELLINGTON, Oct. 1900.



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ALONE IN AFRICA

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS

IN 1885, when Mr. Coillard was at Morijah and made an appeal for helpers to go and work on the Zambesi, I was there. When he said, "Who will go?" I wanted to stand up and offer myself, but a lady sitting next to me took hold of my hand and asked me not to do so until I had thought the matter over. From that day the desire to go to that mission-field grew stronger and stronger.

When at the Huguenot Seminary at Wellington in 1887, I often spoke about it to the principal, dear Miss Ferguson, and told her how impatient I was that the Lord should open the way for me to go. I could not understand why

the desire should be so strong, since I had to wait such a long time. Miss Ferguson prayed with me, and by her sweet encouragement helped me to wait.

When, in 1889, Mr. Goy asked me to become his life companion and go to the Zambesi, I was found ready to go. The Lord had opened the door in a way I had not expected. Mr. Goy had already been for two years at the Zambesi. He told me about all the difficulties I should have to encounter, but nothing daunted me. I had wished to go for such a long time, and was happy to be called to that far-away mission field.

We started from the Orange Free State in an ox-waggon, and, including a stay of several weeks in Kimberley, our journey took us five and a half months. Week after week, day after day, by night and day, we toiled on through difficulties and fatigue, with terrible heat and often in the rain, until we reached the big river on the twelfth of July, at eleven o'clock at night. Our joy knew no bounds when we heard the barking of the dogs, and our driver said, "We are at Kazungula," which is a village and mission

station on the banks of the Zambesi. We looked but could not see anything, and, too impatient to wait till morning, took our lanterns and ran to the river. Of course we could not see much, but we were satisfied. The river was there, lying before us. We were so moved that we could hardly whisper a few words of praise to our Heavenly Father, who had been with us through that terrible journey, and had permitted us to reach the big river safe and sound, and so happy.

The crossing was a strange experience. Everything must be carried over in canoes, box after box, even to the smallest parcel. The waggon must be taken to pieces, and the parts separately ferried to the other side. It was an interesting sight to see the tent of the waggon resting on four or five canoes, and the men rowing with all their might trying to cross the river.

But what a terrible loss it would be if a canoe should capsize and one of the precious parts of the waggon should go to the bottom! To get the oxen across is a difficult matter. Each ox is caught by the horns with a strong *riem* or leather thong. One man in the

canoe holds it, while three or four others are rowing, and so the poor animal is dragged to the opposite bank quite exhausted. To carry a waggon and its load, together with a span of oxen (generally sixteen or eighteen) across, usually takes two or three days when the river is calm; but when there is wind, the work goes very slowly. It took us a whole week for all to cross, and to again put our waggon together and repack. After four more days we reached Sesheke, in the Barotsi Valley, the place to which we had been appointed by the Conference. Oh, it was such a joy to reach there! Now we had come to the spot where we were to work, where we were to be happy, but where we also were to suffer.

As soon as the natives from the village heard the crack of the whip and saw the waggon, they all ran to see the new *moruti* (missionary) and his *meo* (wife). When the waggon stopped the crowd was so great that we could hardly get out. Every one wanted to see and greet us. I really thought that such a reception in a heathen country was indeed beautiful. Our hearts were filled with gratitude, and

also with love for these poor degraded natives. We were young and strong, and felt privileged to give all we could to our Master's service.

We first started the regular Sunday Services and Sunday-school, and later the day-school. Only from five to eight children came, but we were happy even with so few. There was no schoolroom and no church, so that we had to be content with a small hut or sit on the veranda. All the children, except two or three, began with the alphabet and to learn to count up to five. They could barely sing two or three hymns, so our school was not very brilliant, yet the children were anxious to learn, and we soon noticed that they were making fine progress.

Our first year was full of varied experiences. The fever visited us often, leaving us weaker after each attack, and we had much to do. Besides mission work, which included the church services, Sunday-school, day-school, special reading lessons for men and women, and visiting in the village, —besides all these, we had to build our station. But we did not mind this, we were so happy to

know that not a minute of our lives was wasted. Our first great joy was the arrival of a dear little boy, a precious sunbeam that the Lord sent us. He brightened our home, and attracted the people, as a white child is always a curiosity to them. Far from hindering the work, he helped us by his presence. He was the means of showing the poor heathen mothers how children should be brought up. When only a month old I used to take him to school. An old woman had made a large basket for me in which the little Emile could sleep or play while I was busy near him, teaching A B C. Alas! he was not long with us,—the Lord had only lent him to us, and when he was seven months old, after a few days of fever, the dear child ascended up to heaven, to be dearer and more beautiful with the Lord Jesus. This was the first sorrow, but not the last.

In the same year, which was our first one at Sesheke, the queen, Mokwaë, sister of the king Lewanika, came to Sesheke from her capital during the hunting season, and spent six months quite close to us. Her presence gave us much more to do; she used to come and pay us such

long visits, when we had to sit down and try and converse with her.

She also came with some material, and I had to help her to make two dresses. She wanted the bodice to fit well, and was so particular that it caused me much trouble. She came to church somewhat regularly, and we often had serious conversations. She never refused to listen, and always seemed to agree with what we said, but behind our backs how she and her chiefs mocked and laughed at us! how they turned to ridicule all we had told them!

CHAPTER II

A TERRIBLE EXPERIENCE

It was during the stay of Queen Mokwaë at Sesheke that we had a terrible experience. With us at the station were Mr. and Mrs. Buckenham, Mr. Baldwin, and Mr. Ward, English Primitive Methodist missionaries waiting to go to regions beyond, and the queen became terribly vexed one evening because Mr. Ward entered her yard to speak to the herds about some milk which he had bought from them. Her Majesty was absent, having gone with the hunting party.

When Mr. Ward came out of her yard, he invited Mr. Baldwin to go for a walk near the river, as it was a beautiful moonlight evening. They went, and while talking about the way that the queen's house was built, Mr. Ward traced it in the sand. After an enjoyable walk they returned home, without knowing that what they had done had all been noticed and was

to be reported to the queen. When she heard about it she sent Ratau, one of the principal chiefs of Sesheke, together with another one, from the island where she was staying for a few days, to fetch Mr. Ward. She wanted to know what business he had to enter her yard while she was absent, and what was the meaning of the drawing in the sand. When the two chiefs arrived at Sesheke Mr. Ward was down with fever, and could not possibly go, but they decided that Mr. Baldwin should go in his place and give a report of his conduct.

As Mr. Baldwin did not know the language, the chiefs asked Mr. Goy to go as interpreter. These two started from home without the least idea of what was to happen. We gave them food enough for two days, knowing that they could not come back the same day, as they had to travel several hours on the river.

On their arrival the queen was in her hut, and did not show herself, or summon Mr. Goy or Mr. Baldwin to appear before her, as she would have done had she been in a good humour. Mr. Goy, knowing the habits of the Barotsi, felt

anxious at once. Night came on, but no one came to speak to them. In the evening Mr. Goy heard the superstitious discussions in the village. Why had that white man entered the queen's yard in the evening? Why those drawings in the sand? On account of this, some misfortune was sure to happen to the queen. And later on they began to discuss how the white man should be punished,—some said that he should be given to the crocodiles, others that he should be strangled, while others proposed that he should be left on an island to die of hunger.

Fortunately Mr. Baldwin did not know Sesuto then, and did not understand a word of what was said. But it was terrible for Mr. Goy to hear it. He could not sleep all night, but kept thinking of what might be before them. Had they been able to run away they would have done so, but as they were on an island it was quite impossible. The next morning poor Mr. Baldwin was happy, having not the slightest idea of what was going to befall them. Mr. Goy felt exceedingly anxious. He did not like to tell his friend what he had overheard, but

hoped that after a careful explanation they would give up their horrible plan.

After breakfast and prayers Ratau appeared with the announcement that the queen wished to see them in her hut. They took their little stools and went; her Majesty greeted Mr. Goy all right, shook hands with him, but did not even look at Mr. Baldwin. This was a bad sign. After exchanging a few words, they were ordered to sit in the yard, which was already crowded with men looking very wild. The two gentlemen took their stools in the sand, and while they were in the act of sitting down, Mr. Baldwin was forbidden by one of the chiefs to sit on the stool,—he was a bewitcher and had to sit on the burning sand. Mr. Goy objected to this, and said that if Mr. Baldwin was not allowed to sit on a stool he would not use his. The excitement began at once; one of the chiefs rushed upon Mr. Baldwin, pulled his stool away from him and threw it over the yard fence, and then all made a rush at him, ready to drive him away. Mr. Goy held Mr. Baldwin in his arms, and they could not get at him except by striking Mr. Goy's fingers

with their sticks. At last they succeeded in pulling Mr. Baldwin from Mr. Goy's grasp. Three chiefs then held Mr. Goy to prevent him from helping his friend. Mr. Baldwin was dragged out of the yard, amidst wild shouts of "Seize him, seize him!" When he was once out of the yard, Mr. Goy, who was kept a close prisoner, saw nothing more, but only heard the hundreds of voices shouting, "The bewitcher, the bewitcher! Let us strangle him! Let us give him to the crocodiles!" Some pulled him by the arms, some by the legs, while others had hold of him by the neck. It was a dreadful confusion. Mr. Goy was in torture; he begged the chiefs to let him go to at least see what they were doing to his friend or to give him a last adieu, but they refused and began to curse him, saying, "Oh, you false missionary! you pretend you like us, you pretend you have brought peace to our country, and you allow yourself to be a friend of a bewitcher,—you too are a bewitcher!"

During all this time poor Mr. Baldwin was being cruelly tortured by these wicked savages. They put his face in the sand and did all

they could except kill him. After a while a chief was sent by the queen to stop their torturing him any longer, and he was brought back to the yard. Poor friend, blood was running out of his mouth, and he looked pale and faint!

In the confusion his hat was stolen, and he was ordered to sit bareheaded in the scorching sun. He pulled out his handkerchief and threw it over his head. A chief snatched it off and threw it over the fence. "A bewitcher must feel the sun, he must suffer for his wrong-doings." Mr. Baldwin sat in the burning sand for two hours, without anything on his head, while they were discussing as to whether the bewitcher should live or be put to death. Mr. Goy had to interpret everything, and it was indeed a painful and difficult task. At last Queen Mokwaë decided that he should be set at liberty on condition that he pay a fine of £5, which Mr. Goy and Mr. Baldwin gladly accepted, in order to preserve their lives. The poor missionaries returned to their tents tired, worried, and broken-hearted. Mokwaë sent them a message that they could only go home the

following morning. They were bound to spend another night, and to listen to all the curses uttered against them, and they were not sure whether the night would pass without an attack from the natives. After breakfast, Mokwaë gave them two canoes and the required number of paddlers to take them back to Sesheke, but Mr. Goy refused to go in a separate canoe, lest they should leave Mr. Baldwin on an island to die of hunger, fearing from what he had overheard the night before that this might be their plan. Several messengers were sent to the queen, but she remained unmoved, giving for an excuse that the missionaries would not be comfortable if they travelled in the same boat. Mr. Goy said, "We came in one; why cannot we return in one?" At last she was obliged to yield. Our two gentlemen returned home, sad and tired out. It was pitiful to see them. They could hardly tell us of all they had gone through, and poor Mr. Baldwin was obliged to go to bed at once with an attack of fever, and remained there for ten days. No wonder, after the cruel treatment he had suffered.

Mowkaë had done a dreadful thing in treating

a *moruti* so cruelly. Her conscience troubled her. She knew that the king, Lewanika, would be very angry with her, because he liked the missionaries. She sent a message to the king to this effect: "The missionaries, Goy and Baldwin, have been fighting, and we were obliged to separate them." How could she have the courage to tell such a deliberate lie?

Fortunately we were able to send letters to the Valley, and Mr. Goy himself wrote to the king telling him the story as it really happened. Letters have a wonderful effect upon the Barotsi. They think a letter cannot say an untrue thing, so the king believed the letter, and was very much vexed at what his sister, Queen Mokwaë, had done. A special messenger was sent to her by Lewanika with these words: "Come back at once to your village; you will spoil my friendship with the missionaries; you will spoil my friendship with all the white people." So the queen had to leave Sesheke, where she had spent six months. We did not regret her departure, nor that of her followers, who thought, since they belonged to

the great queen, they could do as they pleased. While she stayed at our station we had hard times, difficulties which I cannot speak about, and to crown all, this terrible treatment of the missionaries.

CHAPTER III

YEARS OF TRIAL

DURING this time Mr. Goy was busy building a chapel. No one can realise the amount of labour a building like this means for the missionary, who also must attend to his regular mission-work. He first had to train the oxen to pull the waggon in which the wood must be carried home; then he had to go to the forest and with his own hands cut the lumber, load it on the waggon, drive it home, prepare the wood for the frame, put on the rafters, thatch the roof, and all this with hardly any outside help. The first pillar of this building was planted on the 3rd of June, and on the 5th of the same month our dear little Emile died.

We had not been a year at Sesheke yet, and how many things had already happened! It was hard for our first year,—hard for a

year's experience! We needed much grace from our Heavenly Father. He had to give us courage to continue the work we were so happy to be called to do. We were passing through that arduous and uninteresting period—the breaking up of the fallow ground. We repeated to ourselves these encouraging words: “He that observeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap.” Therefore we fainted not. The Lord had guided and protected us in our first year—we trusted, according to His promises, that He would do so for the coming year.

Our second year also had its difficulties, its sorrows, its sufferings, but likewise its blessings. The chapel, which was begun in June, was only finished in January. Mr. Goy, often prostrated by fever brought on by exposure and fatigue, had been bravely toiling at the building. I helped as much as I could in buying the reeds and the grass, and directing the women about the plastering, which was a long and wearisome work. Sometimes I had between thirty and forty women and girls per day, whom I had to pay every afternoon. Oh, how often they

received double payment by their craftiness! Much of the time I had fever, and was hardly able to stand up. I did not always know what I was doing, and the same woman would come twice to me and claim the two strings of beads which I gave them for their day's work.

The Sunday of the opening of the chapel was a beautiful day for us, although there were not as many present as we had expected. We had at that time at Sesheke as paramount chief the son of the queen Mokwaë, named Nguana Ngono, who was one of the worst characters I have ever met. He professed that he liked us, often came to see us, and, as he was very fond of singing, often asked me to teach him hymns. But in spite of this he had a very mean character, excelling in the art of mockery—not a word, not a gesture escaped him. Once when he was starting for a *razzia* (hunt) in Batokaland with the other chiefs, he came to bid us good-bye. I told him that we would pray for him during his absence; he replied, "Oh yes, do not forget me before the Lord, because He is my Shepherd, I shall

not want. He will take care of me in this life and in the life to come." These were indeed beautiful words, quoted from one of the hymns, and we would have been happy to have heard them from this chief had we not known that they were said in mockery.

Poor Nguana Ngono! one of the hardest things for him was to observe the Lord's day. If he had planned some work he could not wait until Monday, but must begin it on Sunday. At one time it occurred to him to change his village and build it in another place about a hundred yards farther off. He decided this matter on Saturday, and the whole day, Sunday, was spent in carrying reeds, grass, and wood from the old to the new place.

Mr. Goy went to him and said, "Oh, Nguana Ngono, what are you doing? How can you expect the Lord's blessing to rest on you and on your village when you plant its foundation on a Sunday?" "Oh," he replied, "bother your Sunday! always and always Sunday: when will these Sundays end?" Poor man, he knew not that his death was so near. Four weeks later he died from smallpox. He was only ill

four days, and no one, not even the missionary, was allowed to see him. And strange to say, Nguana Ngoni died on a Sunday. What a terrible revelation it must have been to him, the importance of the day of rest, the Lord's day!

At this time the smallpox raged terribly in the valley. Several chiefs and some of the principal men of the king died of the disease, as nothing was done to prevent contagion. Mr. Coillard, the missionary at Sefula, inoculated an ox, and we obtained some virus for ourselves.

In the midst of all our trials the Lord gave us the comfort, the strength, the courage, and the love from on high. Oh! we felt so strongly that He was with us, and that the work was His. When hard days came upon us, when difficulties seemed to give the hand to each other, when the loneliness, the terrible loneliness, overwhelmed us, and the fever oppressed us, oh, how glorious, how sweet it was to fall on our knees, and commune with our best friend, Jesus, with our Heavenly Father, our God!

I wish Christians at home could realise the

loneliness of these far-away mission-fields, where the missionary and his wife are the only white persons, the only Christians on the station. Can you imagine what it is to be only two from the first of January to the thirty-first of December? No, you cannot. Letters became very precious. It was sometimes an interval of many months between letters from friends or any word at all from the civilised world. When letters did come everything was put aside. If a meal were just ready, it was sent away to wait until the precious letters were read—joy and anxiety taking away all desire for food. The dear letters were looked at and turned many times before opening, for we longed, yet feared, to read the messages they contained.

Although we had services, Sunday-school, day-school, visits in the village, conversations about the things of God, can you imagine what it is to get no response? Oh, how I sometimes longed for Christian fellowship; how often I thought of the beautiful churches in Basutoland where the hymns are so delightfully sung! How often I thought of our dear school home at

Wellington, of the meetings we had there, of the sweet conversations we held with our teachers about our faith, our hope, our shortcomings, and our victories! These I missed, these I longed for more than anything else. Often I thought that if I could only find myself in a church again with other Christians, I should weep from beginning to end of the service.

Our third year began very joyfully, the Lord sending us a great consolation in the person of a sweet little girlie whom we named Florette. Indeed she was to us a flower which had blossomed in the desert. She cheered us from the very first day. There are not many flowers at the Zambesi, but she was a flower which ornamented our home and made it bright. The fever was about and attacked her when only ten days old, so that our joy in having her was always mixed with fear.

Another great trial overtook us just at this time. Mr. Goy hurt his knee, and it swelled so much that it required lancing, and who could do it? We had no doctor in the country and no missionary near us to help. I undertook to do it myself, but failed through want of courage.

Then I called a native doctor to whom I had to entrust my poor husband, and he did it fairly well, I suppose, for I knew no better than he. Yet it took a long time to heal, and poor Mr. Goy was kept for six weeks, if not in bed, at least in the house. During this time, with my husband ill and my baby so young, I had the services for six Sundays, and taught school, although I must confess not always very regularly.

The roof of the chapel we had built the year before had come down, and was just being re-thatched. The workmen were there, they could not be sent home while the missionary was ill, and I had to look after the work myself. You should have seen me climbing the ladder, showing the boys how to do the work. I also sawed some planks myself for fear the natives would not do it well and thus spoil the few planks we had.

The Barotsi showed their confidence in us by sending their children to be educated. We had twelve girls and boys in our house, in order that they might attend more regularly as well as learn other necessary things. The girls helped

me in the house, and learned how to sew, wash, iron, bake bread, put the rooms in order, and similar duties. The boys worked with Mr. Goy in the afternoon and learned how to handle tools. These children made us very happy. They put life into the house. I showed the girls what flowers were, and told them how fond we were of them. They took much interest in them, and during the rainy season searched far and near to find me flowers. Early in the morning before I was up they would gather and arrange them in the few vases I had in my dining-room. Once I went into their room, and discovered that they had arranged some flowers in a bottle which they were using as a vase.

I gave them rags and the little pieces which fell in cutting out dresses, and showed them how to make rag dolls. You should have seen that! They made the dolls nicely, as well as clothes for them, and played with their rag dolls with as great enjoyment as European children do with their beautiful wax ones.

Every evening we had prayers with these children and the working boys. We sat in the

yard, sang two or three hymns, and then prayed together. How I enjoyed these evening prayers, and felt that it was a blessed time for us and our children! There our children—our Barotsi boys and girls—learned how to pray, and their simple but earnest prayers did us good.

One day I was busy making some soap, and sent one of the boys to wash the box which I required for it. I said, "Remember the crocodiles, my boy. Take a bucket in which to get the water, and don't wash the box in the river, but on the shore." Alas! The poor little boy did not obey. It was too much trouble to do as I had told him; he went straight to the water, put the box in, and while washing it, a crocodile came and took our poor Ranyama. Finding that he did not return, I sent another boy to call him, but he came back saying, "Mother, Ranyama is not there, and the box is standing in the water." We all went to the river, but never saw Ranyama again.

Ranyama had learned to read in six months' time, and sang nicely. Wherever he went, or whatever he did, that child was always singing. This happened on the 28th of

December 1892, and the following year in December another of our boys was taken by those horrible crocodiles. It was in the morning; I had just rung the school bell and the children ran to the river to wash their faces and hands. While stooping over the water, the little fellow was caught and plunged under never to appear again. It was very hard for us. We had the responsibility of these children, and had repeatedly told them not to wash in the river, but to carry the water on the shore in a bucket, and yet they disobeyed.

Sesheke is known for the number of crocodiles found there. The chief who lived there before the missionaries came to the country used to throw his people into the river for the slightest fault or failure, and so the crocodiles there are very fond of human flesh. They often seized children from the village and even grown persons; and our cattle, our sheep, our dogs, and once a beautiful horse. Frequently such animals were seized and plunged into the water, never to appear again. Once we heard the shouts of people and saw them running to the river in despair,—a

crocodile had taken a big girl of sixteen or seventeen years. We also went, but no one could help. The crocodile was dragging her into the water, and every now and then we saw a hand or a foot, or part of her back on the surface of the water, but as soon as the men in their canoes approached she disappeared again. The crocodile took her into the high reeds and must have eaten her there. Such things are very sad, and the river is full of these dangerous creatures.

CHAPTER IV

FIRST-FRUITS

IN June 1894 we began to see the first conversions. At every station we had a revival. It was a beautiful and blessed time, so grand, so glorious, to see these poor heathen standing up in the church and declaring that they wanted to become the Lord's children. We had been anxiously watching for the appearance of the little cloud, and the showers of blessing it would bring. Amidst great difficulties we had been ploughing and sowing, and now, with songs of triumph, we were rejoicing for those whose consciences were awakening. We could not help shedding tears of joy when men, women, and children came to us asking what they must do to be saved. A woman came to me one morning very early and said, "Help me to pray: what must I say? what must I ask of the Lord? Teach

me how to pray." All our difficulties, our sufferings, our tears seemed little compared with the great joy of seeing sinners repent and turn to the Lord.

Our children in the house were the first to come forward. One Sunday morning after we had been to Kasungula for a conference, where many had stood up to confess their sins and express a desire to live differently, all of our children, seven boys and five girls, stood up. They had not told me that they wished to become Jesus' children. As soon as the sermon was ended, one little girl rose and said, "I used to steal and tell lies to Missis, but now I want to belong to God." We had such a beautiful time at prayers that night, we could hardly stop singing; the words meant what they had never meant before. At once we noticed a change in the spirit of the school. The children were more careful in preparing their lessons and in doing faithfully the duties assigned to them about the house.

We immediately started prayer meetings and catechism classes, one for grown people, and

another for the younger ones. The chief reason for dividing them was because the children knew their Bible much better than their parents, having learned it at school, while the parents had only heard it on Sundays at church and what we could tell them in our short visits at their homes. The catechism class we really called "the inquirers' class," and as these people were not thoroughly converted we could not prepare them for baptism. Some of them had been impressed by a sermon, others only joined for the sake of joining, and because they wanted to learn more. Poor heathen! they had a certain desire to change their lives; they had heard how God helped Noah, Abraham, Joseph, and David, because they trusted in Him, but they required much instruction, and their faith must increase mightily before they could renounce their superstition and fetish worship.

Every Sunday for three months we had some coming forward, until our inquirers' class numbered ninety-eight. The chieftainess, Mokwaë, was one of those who stood up in church, saying she wanted to be a Christian and desired

to be baptized. Mr. Goy reasoned with her and wanted her to wait awhile, but she came to me the following Sunday morning and asked me to pray with her. I tried to show her what it meant, and that she was deciding for her life-time. She replied, "Yes, Missus, I'm ready, I do want to be a Christian for my whole life." Poor Mokwaë! Her good resolutions lasted for nine months, and then disappeared like a morning mist, and she went back to her heathen ways with redoubled zeal.

I started a woman's prayer meeting in her yard and for the first two months she was a regular attendant, but later on was not only irregular herself, but tried to prevent the others from coming. One Monday she and another poor woman who sat crouched in a corner were the only two present. I turned to her and said, "Mokwaë, where are the other women?" "I do not know," she answered. Of course I knew that she had forbidden them to come into her yard. After asking her a few questions about the last Sunday's sermon we prayed together, and then she said, "I do not know why the women do not come to the meetings,

I think we had better give them up." I saw that she did not wish to have any more meetings in her yard, so I told the women they could come to me, but Mokwaë did everything in her power to keep them from coming. She would send one of her boys, as soon as she heard the bell ring, to tell the women who were on their way to my house that the chieftainess wanted them. When they appeared before her she commanded them to sit down, and when it was time for the meeting to be over she would tell them they might go.

Some of the boys in her yard were converted, and when Mr. Goy told them they must not strangle people any more, they replied, "What can we do? If we do not do as she tells us, she will give the order for us to be strangled."

Alas! Some of our first inquirers had grown cold already; others have entirely returned to heathenism. Poor people! Some of them thought that they would receive all kinds of things for becoming the Lord's children, and they were disappointed because the beads and the dress stuff were not given to them as pay-

ment for becoming Christians. It is often the case with these poor natives.

An old chief at Sesheke, one of our inquirers, came to see us one day. As he was leaving we gave him the skin of the sheep we had just killed. The poor old man was quite pleased, but in the village he met another chief who said to him, "Who gave you that skin?" "The missionary," replied our old man. "Oh," said the other, "is that all you receive for being converted? Is that all your reward for going so faithfully to the services, and to all the meetings? The *moruti* ought to have given you a beautiful coat or a fine black hat. But for a sheepskin I should never take so much trouble." The old man did not reply, but came back the next day and sadly repeated what he had been told.

Some of our inquirers grew cold because, being slaves of heathen chiefs, they were not always allowed to come to church, or to the meetings, and at last gave up their faith.

Once our chieftainess at Sesheke had it announced on the Saturday evening, by one of her men in power, that all those who went

to church the following Sunday would be given to the crocodiles. Her threats were so strong that the whole village was frightened, and for several weeks not a soul dared to come to church. We went to the village as often as we could to see our new converts, and speak to them about their faith, but we noticed how afraid they were of even speaking aloud in their yards, lest the chieftainess should hear of it, or that it should be repeated to her by others. In such cases progress could not be very satisfactory.

The story of Litia, the son of the king, Lewanika, is an interesting example of what the power of God can do among these natives. He was converted at this time and his wife with him. He had two other wives with whom he parted at his conversion. Litia has made wonderful progress in the Christian life. He has been very zealous and he is really learning the word of God, and is trying to rule his life in accordance with God's commandments. He often came to the missionary with his Bible to ask for explanations in connection with the portion he had been reading. He prayed well,

and seemed to really understand and feel that for which he asked or thanked God.

Every Saturday night a bell is rung in his yard, and the men and boys who are converted gather there, and Litia holds a meeting with them. He has given up all the heathen customs, and, as much as is in his power, prohibits strangulation in his village. He has also made great strides toward civilisation. According to the custom of the country, a wife speaks to her husband with as much respect as if he were a chief, and Litia's wife always had to clap her hands whenever she saw him or whenever he spoke to her. But now you should see them together! They speak so nicely to each other and walk together to the missionary's house, each holding a hand of their little girl. When invited to dinner, she sits opposite to him and is as natural as possible. It is an unheard-of thing for a native woman to sit at table with her husband. Litia is very clever with his hands; he made a beautiful table for his dining-room, where he takes his meals with his wife and child. He has a sewing-machine and makes his own clothes, and they

are well made too. I found him once working with his wife; she was busy cutting and tacking her little girl's dress, and Litia was stitching it with the machine. It was indeed touching to see this father and mother, so lately come out of heathenism, together providing for their child's clothing. Litia is the future heir to the kingdom, and as he is a Christian it would seem that God has a beautiful future in store for the Barotsi nation. Do pray for Litia and his wife, Romoyo, that they may be kept faithful to the end.

CHAPTER V

MINGLED JOYS AND SORROWS

It was also in 1894 that our little Lucie was born, a second sunbeam in our Zambesian home. Our two little girls made us exceedingly happy. A few weeks after Lucie's birth I had the pleasure of receiving one of my sisters who came to visit us. She was appointed by the Conference to take charge of the school at Sesheke, and I cannot tell you what a help it was to us who had been quite alone for three years. She was very well for the first five months, but after that she began to have fever, and had it so badly that she was in bed for weeks and weeks. She was never without fever, and in April 1895, was obliged to leave the country and return to Basutoland.

We had to take charge of the school again until August of the same year, when a Mosuto evangelist was sent to help us in the school

and the other work. His coming was such a comfort to us. Our task was somewhat lessened, and we felt that we could carry on our work with a little more ease,—not living in a continual rush from morning till night. When the evangelist was once established we took a few weeks' holiday and went to visit Mr. Coillard and the other missionaries in the Barotsi Valley. We travelled up the river by canoe, and spent fifteen days in going up and ten days in coming back to Sesheke. This is not the easiest nor the safest way of travelling, but the shortest. We preferred the way of the river to the slow bullock-waggon. The canoes are not more than three feet broad and from twenty to twenty-five feet long. We were as comfortable as could be possible on such a narrow piece of wood. Each of us, with the exception of the children, who had to be placed one with each parent, occupied a separate canoe. The dear little ones caused us much anxiety, for in case the canoe had been upset, either by a hippopotamus or in the rapids, it would have been almost impossible to save them. But how good the Lord was to us! The protection He spread over us

was clearly visible. That long journey on the river was simply perfect. One day when some hippopotami were showing their ugly heads, and we were in the greatest danger, I heard one of our paddlers say, "Nothing will happen to us; let us not be afraid, for we are travelling with the children of Jesus." Even the poor heathen felt that a special protection was resting upon us.

Five delightful weeks were passed at Lealui, and we also had an opportunity to visit King Lewanika and see his large village. He sent us an ox. Soon other chiefs followed their king's example and sent us oxen too. We received no less than eleven oxen, but as we had nothing on which to feed our paddlers (because of the famine caused by a visitation of locusts), we killed one ox after another, and in six weeks the eleven oxen were eaten.

This was the most thorough rest we had had since coming to the Zambesi. After we returned home I prepared my little Florette's outfit to leave me. Poor darling! She was so young still, but we had to send her to Basutoland to my sister. She suffered much from fever, and

was so pale that she often looked as if she would pass away. Many a time I went to her little cot at night to listen to her breathing, fearing it might have stopped. To send her to a healthier climate was to save her precious life. She left with Mr. Coillard and Mr. and Mrs. Jalla at the end of 1895.

Of the many adventures we had with lions, tigers, and hyenas, I have said nothing, yet we had plenty of them. Our lives were but once in real danger. When we went to visit the Victoria Falls we travelled three days on foot, and had to spend the night in the open air, our boys making shelter for us and for themselves out of grass and boughs. One night we all felt quite nervous, and did not exactly know what was the matter. We kept two big fires burning all night, and started from the place very early in the morning. Mr. Goy and I left before the boys, and when we had walked about fifty yards, we saw the tracks of a lion crossing the road and disappearing in the high grass. Fortunately we did not try to follow the lion, or we would have found him quite near. After walking on for about two or three minutes, the lion saw us ;

he came out of the long grass and followed us. Our boys, walking on behind, saw the terrible danger that was threatening. They could not fire at the immense creature for fear they might miss, when the lion would spring upon us. They could not call to attract our attention, for then we would have turned back face to face with the lion, who of course would have sprung upon us. What could be done? The boys were clever indeed. They made a big detour and appeared in front of us without our knowing the reason. One of them came to me, and, taking my hand, said, "Mother, run, run for your life." I did run, and as hard as I could, without even asking him why. Mr. Goy and the other boys were coming quickly but noiselessly behind, and after we had gone about a mile we sat down and learned of the narrow escape we had had. We were quite close to a village, and with those we could gather there we held a prayer meeting, and believe me, thanked the Lord for His protection.

Sesheke is not only famous for crocodiles, but lions as well. We often had them around our house; many times they attacked our kraals,

and every year we deplored some losses among our cattle. They killed, in one night, eight head of cattle, another time six, five, and two, &c.

The tigers¹ visited us often and the hyenas every night. One night, having been awakened by one of the children, I quieted her and then went to the window. Lifting up the curtain I looked out. It was a beautiful moonlight night, as bright as day, and what did I see? An enormous tiger passing under the window, with his long, bushy tail hanging on the ground. Quietly and majestically he walked across the yard. I was so taken by surprise that I stopped to admire the creature, instead of calling Mr. Goy to come and kill it. When I thought of calling my husband it was too late; the tiger was just turning around the corner of the house in the direction of the forest.

In February 1896, the rinderpest came, and we saw it in all its horror. We had such a fine herd, and greatly enjoyed the milk and butter, which were our staple food, and

¹ "Tiger" is the South African name for the leopard. There are no true tigers in Africa.

we could not believe that they would be taken from us. The disease was unknown to us, and, of course, we knew no remedy for it. My little Lucie was only eighteen months old and she lived entirely on milk. We had not a single tin of condensed milk in the house, and there was no place where we could get any.

Oh, how I prayed, how I cried to the Lord to save us just one cow for my child, but all died! Ah, it was hard, very hard, to accept it all without a murmur—to believe that this trial was also for our good. I did admire my poor husband, who accepted everything with so much resignation, and remained quiet in the face of such disaster. Many a time we had to bow in reverence and humility to our omnipotent God, who manifested His might in every detail of our lives. Through His strength I also became resigned, and did not worry about the future, although it seemed dark, oh, so dark! We trusted in our Heavenly Father; we clung to Him every hour, every minute.

Soon we heard that rinderpest had also broken out in Matabeleland and Bechuanaland,

and that we could not get provisions for that year, and perhaps for two or three years following.

We tried to find a goat for our little Lucie, but the milk had such a strong taste that after a few days the child refused to take it. Then the poor girlie had to do with water for several weeks. I put some sugar into it to make it a little more palatable, and that, with porridge made from mealie meal, was all she had. After two hard months, we managed to buy milk in the village from those whom the rinderpest had not treated as badly as it had us.

The hardest of all were the troubles that we had just at that time with our chieftainess. She became vexed with Mr. Goy because he reproved her for ill-treating her servants, or, rather, slaves. One girl, Chubo, she hated especially, and tried to kill. One afternoon she took a *sjambok*¹ and beat Chubo so hard that her body was covered with wounds. When she stopped beating her, the poor slave crawled

¹ Whip made of the hide of a hippopotamus, cut in one piece tapering to a point.

into the forest and hid herself until late at night, when she managed to get to our house. She knocked at our door, and what was Mr. Goy's surprise, when he opened it, to find her there, begging him to hide her from the chieftainess! We took the poor creature in, knowing very well the danger to which we were exposing ourselves, but we could not refuse to help her. Poor Chubo! she had not a thread of clothing on her, and was in a miserable condition. Her face was in a dreadful state, the lower lip being torn, and one of the eyes terribly swollen. I rubbed some vaseline on the wounds, and we gave her a blanket in which to sleep, and some bread and coffee, and she was comforted. She stayed with us a whole week, without the fact becoming known to any one. Then I sent her with a letter to Litia, and she remained with him eight months, when Mokwaë sent word that she wanted to marry her to some one, so she came back to be married.

It is customary, when a chief has a little boy, for him to choose a girl of about the boy's age. Every now and then a present

of food is sent to the girl, and when the chief has been out hunting he sends her a skin, nicely prepared, as a present. When the girl is thirteen or fourteen years old, her parents take her to her future husband. There is very little ceremony connected with the marriage. The bride, shining with grease, puts on a new skin dress, and is ornamented with beads and necklaces. An afternoon of feasting and merry-making follows, and this completes the festivities.

After her return, Mr. Goy told the chieftainess that in future Chubo should be treated differently, and that he should look upon her as his own child. Mokwaë promised everything he asked, but held a grudge against us ever after. If she only could have driven us out of the country, she would have done it. "What! that white man," as she called Mr. Goy, "dare interfere in her dealings with her slaves!" No, she could not stand that,—she must revenge herself.

She tried to take away from us all the children we had in the house, as well as the working boys. She said, "I would give anything if I only could see the *moruti* going to herd his

flocks himself, and the missis taking the bucket to draw water at the river." Her threats were dreadful, but, fortunately, her counsellor, the old Ratau, did not agree with her and refused to carry out her suggestions. Then she was furious; she forbade her people coming near the missionary's house, either for the regular services or anything else.

One thing she could not stop, and that was our visits in the village. We knew she could rave against us, but she could not touch us. We went as often as possible to visit our inquirers, to speak and pray with them and encourage them to live the Christian life.

CHAPTER VI

LEFT ALONE

It was at this time, and in the midst of other difficulties unnecessary to mention here, that Mr. Goy undertook an evangelistic tour. On the 15th day of April he left me at home, quite alone, and set out for a two weeks' absence to the far-off valleys of the Linyanti River where many of the villages could only be reached by canoe during the time of the flood, and where Mr. Goy could only go once a year. Often, upon this journey, he had to take off his boots and stockings to go from the canoe to dry ground, and that before sunrise and after sunset. Of course, in a country such as we were living in, that is enough to cause sickness. As a result, my poor husband was stricken with a very severe attack of fever, and, instead of being away for two weeks, as he had planned, he returned home at the end of the first week.

On Tuesday evening, the 21st of April, he arrived with a burning fever, and went straight to bed, and never rose again. For two days he was very ill, calling all the time for "water, water." On the 24th he seemed a little better, and said he needed a good rest; he expressed a fear of being obliged to return home to Europe before long. Saturday morning, the 25th, he said to me, in such a calm and quiet way, "My dear, I think that the Lord is going to take me away from you." "Oh, no," I said, "it is impossible, quite impossible; how can you leave me alone in this country, —alone with such a young child?" "No," he replied, "it is not impossible, because it is the Lord's will. He will care for you and for our dear little Lucie." He spoke of heaven and his joy in going there. He gave me messages for all his dear ones, naming them, one after the other. In the evening we had prayers in his room with all our girls and boys, and he prayed most beautifully. He sent for the chieftainess and spoke to her kindly, yet sternly, telling her to be careful that her village did not become a second Sodom. During the night he

prayed again, with such beauty and clearness that no one would ever have thought that he was so near the end. Often he asked me to look up and see the multitude of angels who had come to meet him. He was happy to go,—he was ready to go. Toward the end one thing troubled him. He said, “We have ploughed, we have sown, but oh! what will the harvest be? We have sown in the darkness, we have sown in the light; oh! what will the harvest be?”

Towards the end he said again, “There, the angels are quite near; they are behind you. Now all is finished, all is ready. How beautiful! how beautiful!” He asked me for a glass of water, raised himself up, took the glass, drank the water, and, lying down again, quietly passed away.

This was Sunday, the 26th. There I was, left alone—entirely alone. The Mosuto evangelist and his wife did all they could to help me, but I felt as if I were lost in a terrible desert. The first moments were hard, very hard!

The evangelist sent a boy to the village to

let them know that the *moruti* had passed away. In less than an hour the chieftainess, the chiefs, men, women, and children, were in and around the house to show their sympathy. Not a voice was to be heard; they only came and sat for hours, some of them crying very quietly.

Had I not known, by experience as well as by faith, that the Lord never makes a mistake, and that He does everything for our good and for the advancement of His kingdom, I should have lost courage, I should have fainted and become utterly prostrated.

But I must take courage and think of what was to be done next. I took the measurements for the coffin and for the grave myself, went to choose the spot and show the boys how to dig the grave, and then had to look for planks to make the coffin. The evangelist helped me much in making the coffin, but he could not do it alone; in that also I had to help, and when it was finished we laid in it the remains of our beloved one. I leave you to picture what it all was to me.

On Saturday I had sent to Kazungula for

Mr. Boiteun, the missionary there. He arrived only after sunset, Sunday evening, and conducted the burial the following morning. My husband is resting under the shadow of three beautiful wild trees. Oh, the loneliness, the want of parents and of friends! No one can imagine the suffering I endured, the longing I had to tell my trouble to those I loved. How I cast myself in the arms of Jesus! How I clung to Him! I needed Him every moment to sustain and strengthen me, and to repeat to me the comforting words, "Be not afraid, for I am with thee;" and the beautiful psalm was so helpful to me,—“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord.” My poor husband loved his work very much. He was fond of his station, and had got everything into good order. Things always looked neat, as he was orderly even in the smallest detail. And now everything was left without care. Oh, it was very sad!

The week after Mr. Goy's death, Miss Kiener came. She stayed with me for three weeks, but after that I was alone for

three months, with the evangelist, who conducted the Sunday services, while I had the school.

About six weeks after my husband's death, Queen Mokwaë's village was almost entirely destroyed by fire. Remembering Mr. Goy's last injunction to her, to be careful that her village did not become a second Sodom, I felt very anxious lest she should blame me for this calamity. As soon as I heard that the village was on fire, I went over there. I found most of the houses burning, and Mokwaë, in a state of great excitement, rushing about quite wildly. I took her hand and said, "You must not be so excited; what can be done will be done." Then she thought of Mr. Goy's words, and said, "Will the rest of my village burn down?" I replied, "I do not think so, but the people must be very careful." I tried to tell her the exact truth, but I had to be guarded in what I said. She was always serious when in my presence, but oh, so cruel to her slaves!

During the eight months after Mr. Goy's death, when I was quite alone, a poor girl had

disobeyed Mokwaë, and she ordered that she should be strangled. The order was carried out, and the poor girl left lying half-dead. Mokwaë told them that they had not done their work well; they might go and finish it, and then she had her buried at once, for she was afraid to have the body over night in the village.

When the news came to me, I felt that I should go and speak to her, but her only reply was, "I have not killed her; the men have." The Christians always kept me informed of her doings, and whenever I reproved her for her wickedness, she would look up in surprise, and say, "Who told you about this?"

Mokwaë still lives at Sesheke, but her cousin, Litia, who is a Christian, helps to keep her in order, and she is not able to carry out her wicked designs.

In October Miss Kiener came to me again, and stayed until I left in December, and, with her assistance, I was able to continue all the work from which Mr. Goy had been taken. She kept the school going, the evangelist

conducted the services, while I looked after the house and saw individuals when they came for help. Of the conduct of the native Christians during this time I cannot speak too highly.

CHAPTER VII

PERILS IN THE WILDERNESS

THE rinderpest broke out in February, and Mr. Goy died in April. On account of this dreadful disease we were cut off from all communication with the outside world, the nearest mission station being forty miles distant. Famine had followed rinderpest, and we were not only without European food, but also without cloth, the current coin, with which to buy grain, &c., from the natives. We lived mostly on mealie meal, pumpkins, and sweet potatoes. Sugar was very scarce, and many of the missionaries were obliged to use honey instead. I still had enough tea and coffee left to take me to Palapye.

It was impossible for me to remain at Sesheke, but the rinderpest had killed all the cattle, and I had no means of leaving the station. Efforts were made by the missionaries

to get oxen, both to take me away and to bring back provisions. Oxen for the trip were at last found. Mr. Jalla sent me twenty in September from Sefula, Mr. Coillard's station, where they had escaped the rinderpest.¹ I did not use them for three months, so as to be sure they would not take it. Now we had the

¹ It is most interesting to know how these oxen were secured. Mr. Coillard had some copies of the New Testament and some hymn-books. These were sold to his pupils. He says, "From the moment that they knew that the New Testament and hymns were for sale our pupils were jubilant. One brought his ox, another went to demand a calf of his father, and for each we made a little packet of books and garments to the value of his animal. You should have seen one charming little boy coming joyfully to tell us that his heifer had come; and soon afterwards, sure enough, a pretty creature of two years old was gambolling in our court. The whole school was present; and when I brought the books, with a shirt and some pieces of stuff, there was a general exclamation of surprise. The little fellow came up, his eyes sparkling with delight; and he no sooner had the books in his hand than he jumped and skipped like his own heifer, and ran into the village, followed by all his companions. . . . It is a marvellous thing that these heathen children who hardly know how to read, should desire to possess the Word of God. It is no less marvellous that their heathen parents should furnish them with the means of procuring it—they who know nothing of the Gospel. . . . Eighteen calves were thus bought, and now form a team which has, happily, escaped the rinderpest (1897), and has been used to bring Madame Goy (now a widow) out of the country." *On the Threshold of Central Africa*, by François Coillard.—*Editor's Note*.

oxen, but there was no waggon. In this dilemma, I bethought myself of the hind wheels of a waggon which had been left at Sesheke some years before by a trader. I arranged them into a cart about six feet long, and covered it with a sail or tent, and, cutting a tree in the forest, fixed its trunk to my cart as a *disselboom* (pole). Our vehicle was then packed, ready for departure. Going indoors for a moment, I heard a crack and a crash, and, rushing to the door, found to my dismay, the *disselboom* up in the air, the cart tilted back, and my packages shot out upon the ground at the rear. Packing our cart again, we arranged two wooden props under it at the back, to stop that tendency to tilt backwards. Sending the cart on by road I went down by the river Zambesi.

When we came to Kazungula, where we were to cross the Zambesi, which at this place is five hundred yards wide, the cart had to be taken off the wheels. The upper part was placed in a canoe, and there were four canoes around it, with four boys, one in each, holding on to the cart by *riems* or straps, and

eight boys, two in each canoe, rowing the load across. The oxen were held up by straps attached to their horns. They swam for a short distance, the rest of the way being simply dragged through the water, and, very much frightened, they reached the opposite bank in an exhausted condition. I had to superintend the taking to pieces of the cart myself, as well as the crossing of the river and the building up again. It was two whole days before we were once more ready for the road.

At night my little girl and I slept in the cart on a mattress which rested on the boxes.

I was able to carry but little food with me owing to the famine, but I took a cow from Sesheke, so as to have milk for my little girl, who was only two and a half years old. Eight young Barotsi boys started with me, five of whom were to take back the cart to the Zambesi with some provisions for the missionaries, and one of these had worked at the station and had learned how to drive, so that I was especially glad to have him with

me. The other three had been five years with me, and I wanted to bring them down to continue their studies. Day after day for three weeks we journeyed through apparently never-ending forest, and night after night surrounded our little camp with fires to keep off wild beasts. It was impossible to lose our way in the forest, as there was a road built by one of the traders and much improved by Mr. Coillard, but our cart was often caught in the bushes and overhanging branches of trees, and we were unable to proceed until these had been cut away.

At the end of three weeks we reached the Nata River. There we met the two post-boys, going to the Zambesi, and it was a happy day for me, for they brought me my letters. They gave me the disquieting news that at a cattle post three days from where we were they were having the rinderpest, and that the cattle were dying all along the road to Palapye. What was I to do? To go on was to take my oxen to certain death, for they had not had the disease, yet help must be sent to those in difficulty, as they

had very little to live upon. I thought of my little girl and my own weakness, and mother-love joined the cry for self-preservation to force me to go on with my cart.

I took my little Lucie in my arms and prayed to God to show me what to do. Then I decided to leave my cart and oxen in charge of two of the boys at the Nata, and to push on, on foot, through the remaining two hundred miles of desert to Palapye, where I would try to engage at mule-waggon to bring supplies to the Nata.

A day or two before reaching the Nata we had been overtaken by nine young Barotsi from Sesheke who were going to the gold-fields. They were starving. For some days their sole food had been caterpillars. They begged for food, and though I thought of my own little band and my small stock of food, it was impossible to refuse, and I told them to share with the others of my band. They asked to travel with me and help me for their food, and that was all the payment they received.

I told the boys of my plans, stating that two of them must remain with the cart; they all

consented, and we took a day to put everything right. I arranged a kind of stretcher with *riems* stretched across, on which were placed two cushions, while boughs of trees were bent over it to hold up the canvas which served as a roof. This stretcher rested on four poles, and the boys consented to carry myself and baby in it. I started from the Zambesi on January 5th with fifteen young men, but after carrying me for about half-an-hour, they said, "Mother, it is too heavy." This was not strange, as they were quite young boys and not very strong. What could I do? go back to the waggon? No! this thought always followed me, "How will the missionaries live unless I send them food?" I felt an unknown courage take hold of me, and decided to go on. Yes, I walked the two hundred miles, leading the way, the boys following. My little Lucie was carried by one of the boys; our food was packed in biscuit tins, and we had three sheep with us, as well as our cow, to give Lucie milk, and, in the event of all else failing, to give us meat. Two days later our cow sickened of rinderpest and died. The natives skinned it and took the meat, which

lasted them for five days. I was anxious about the oxen I had left behind. Were they ill? Was all my labour to be for nothing, and would they die?

We had to push on through the hot sand, ankle deep, walking two hours and resting two, and reaching a sheltered spot at night. It is not a stony country, but soft sand. I had two pairs of boots; the first pair lasted about two weeks, the other took me to Palapye. I often crossed rivers, when I took off my boots and stockings. When it rained it was very wet the first day, but the day after the water had all sunk into the sand. Although we were so exposed we were never ill, and my feet were never sore. We were obliged to carry our water with us, and if we did not think to catch some when it rained we would be without.

At night we used the stretcher which I had prepared for a sleeping place. It rested upon notched sticks which were driven into the ground so that it did not touch the earth. Over the boughs which were bent above it I threw an ox skin, making a waterproof protection from the rain. One night I was in an

exceedingly bad place, the water ran in and everything became wet. There was no help for it—we had to keep on our wet things, but no one took cold or had even a touch of fever, and I felt that the Lord was giving us strength for the journey. Sometimes we were frightened when we met people because we were so near to Matabeleland and we feared the Matabele people.¹ Occasionally we met some stray Bushmen, but we could not trust them and they were afraid of us. Often when we asked them to show where water could be found they would send us in quite an opposite direction.

We had left our only gun at the Nata River, and, notwithstanding that it was the time of the year when wild beasts were most likely to roam about, we never saw one during the whole journey, nor even heard the roar of a lion. Sometimes in the morning we would see the tracks of the lions, and the boys would say to me, "See, mother, how near the lions have been to us." When Mr. Goy and I went up to the Zambesi seven years before, we often heard the

¹ This was soon after the Matabele War.—*Ed.*

roar of the lions and tigers and only a fire could keep them away, but now, without a gun, we never met one.

The Lord was so good to us! Our heavenly Father never forsook us. Every evening I called my fifteen boys together and we sang and prayed, and I felt that God was hearing our prayers. I could tell them with conviction that help would come some time. When we were in great difficulty they would come near and say, "Oh, we trust the Lord will not forsake you, mother." How precious it was to tell them that I was not anxious; that help would come, though I could not tell how! Even the unconverted among them would not go to sleep until we had had prayers. We always rested on Sunday.

CHAPTER VIII

FAITH TESTED

My three Christian boys carried Lucie tied on their backs with a shawl, in true native fashion, excepting that the natives use a skin instead of a shawl. She got very tired and cried a great deal towards the end of the journey, but we could not stop for her. We were obliged to hurry on because of lack of water. Gradually our food ran short. Twice, for two days each time, we passed through absolutely waterless districts, carrying our water with us, in our now otherwise empty biscuit tins. I made the water-carrier walk just before me for fear the precious liquid would upset or be wasted, and I had to dole it out in measured quantities at certain intervals. One day we came to a Bushman village where I paid ten shillings for five packages of biltong made from cattle which

had died from the rinderpest. This I gave to the boys, and thus was enabled to eke out my fast-failing provisions for two days longer.

Just before this time we had encountered one of our worst experiences. We were stopped for four days by an apparently never-ceasing rain. My poor boys made a miserable shelter for themselves, and I counted myself well off under an ox-skin stretched over pegs driven into the ground. How cold it was and comfortless! How it made me throw myself on the protection of my Heavenly Father, when I saw the food growing steadily less and ourselves doing nothing! When the rain had passed I gave an extra supply of food to two of my young men and sent them on ahead to Palapye, with a letter to Khama, asking for help.

Two days later, when our supply of rinderpest biltong was gone and I had only a little macaroni and rice for Lucie and myself, so that we were in great straits, we came to another Bushman village, where the chief was one of Khama's men. They were very kind to us, and gave us milk served in tortoise

shells, which they use for dishes. The chief had cows, sheep, and goats, but when I asked him to sell me a sheep, he refused, saying the sheep were Khama's. About half-an-hour afterwards I asked him again to sell me a sheep, and told him we were quite out of food. He called a boy and instructed him to kill one of the best sheep, and then he gave it to me and said, "I give you this as a present; I do not sell sheep to missionaries."

We had taken water from the Bushman village, but it soon gave out, and only one tin remained for the baby. One of the boys who was carrying it, brought the tin to me one night and said, "Now, missis, keep that water very carefully, for I am so thirsty that if I keep it I will drink it in the night." We travelled a whole day and night without water, and then one of the boys came to me and said, "Now, mother, you cannot go any farther. You stay here and we will take these two calabashes and go until we find water." The evening of the next day we met them coming back with the water, and it was indeed touching to see them. They came to me and said, "Mother, the Lord

has given us water," and, putting down the calabashes, they asked me to thank God for the water. They were so glad to have it, but there was no food.

Four days of the faith-testing passed. A handful of rice and a spoonful of grease in a pot of water was all the food I could serve out each day for the whole of my thirteen. For myself and little girl I had managed to save a little macaroni. The conduct of my lads was perfect. Never a word of complaint, never a sign of dissatisfaction during that time. Most of them were heathen, but the help God had given us must have impressed them much, for if, by chance, we were later than usual with our evening prayer, they would come and say, "Mother, are we not going to pray to God to protect us?"

When we left the village I had told my boys that we did not have enough food to take us on to Palapye, but we must trust the Lord. We struggled on for a few days, and at last, utterly exhausted, we gave up and waited for the hoped-for succour.

Our food gave out on Saturday, and Sunday

we stopped by the way, and I held a little service with the boys, as I had also done the two previous Sabbaths. Three Sundays came during that journey and we never travelled on Sunday. Monday the boys declared they were too weak to walk any farther. They stewed and ate a *sjambok* (leather whip) they had with them, and then starvation stared us in the face. During the day I heard one boy who was sitting under a big tree say, "We remain here because missis is our mother, but were she any other white person we would desert her." I went to them and said, "You are not going to desert me, are you?" They replied, "No, we will not, but when are we to have food?" I said, "I feel sure it will come to-night." But while I was sitting with my little Lucie under a tree during the day, I heard one of the boys say, "How funnily the birds sing in this country." Soon the sound was repeated, "Ha-i, Ha-i," and then one of them said, "That is not a bird singing,—it is a man driving oxen." I at once started in the direction of the sound, and just behind the trees was a waggon with two drivers. Our thankfulness knew no bounds.

Khama had sent a waggon with provisions, drawn by eight beautiful oxen, in charge of Ratshoka, his son-in-law. As soon as he saw me the driver advanced and said, "You are the *moruti* I have come to meet." "Yes," I replied, and drawing the waggon near to our camp and placing the provisions on the ground before me, they said, "Khama sends you his greetings, and asks you to accept these as a present, and we are to take you to Palapye as fast as possible."

Oh the capacity of that waggonette! A half box of mealie meal, a box filled with tea, another with sugar, jam, condensed milk, corned beef, biscuits, canned fruit, &c., and last but not least, a good mattress supplied by dear Mrs. Willoughby, wife of the missionary at Palapye. When the food had been taken out of the waggon, I turned to my boys and asked, "What must we do now?" "We must thank God," was the fitting answer. I gave them some mealie meal to boil, and they boiled twice in their pots, and when they had finished their second portion they said, "Mother, we are satisfied." After I had opened the second box I gave them each two biscuits and they held out

both hands to receive them. It did not take us long to re-pack the things into the waggon, and in an hour the oxen were inspanned again and we started onward. The boys put all their loads into the waggon and walked beside it, singing as they went, while my little Lucie and I indulged in a long hearty sleep. Two and a half days brought us to Palapye, where we received a warm welcome from Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, with whom I spent eight more days delightfully. We had been eighteen days on the way from the Nata River.

CHAPTER IX

HOME AT LAST

SOON after I arrived, Khama came to see me. The next day I went to his court, and when I thanked him for the help he had sent me (in addition to which, he had kept my two boys, who were tired out, sending two of his own instead), he said, "Oh, missus, do not mention it. I have done so little for you." When I offered to pay the boys, Khama said, "No, the boys are mine, the waggonette and the oxen are mine too, and I want nothing for the help I have sent you."

But I did not forget my friends on the Zambesi, nor my faithful boys who remained behind at the Nata River, and while at Palapye I looked around for a conveyance to take food to these hungry ones. I found at Palapye provisions for the missionaries which had been lying

there for a year, but could not be sent on account of the rinderpest.

Securing a cart and salted oxen, *i.e.* oxen which were immune from the rinderpest, I sent a load of provisions back to the boys who had been so patiently waiting on the banks of the Nata River. On arrival there they reloaded the provisions into the cart which was waiting, and my two faithful boys went back to the Zambesi, while Khama's men returned to Palapye with my boxes.

While at Palapye, I wired to my sisters, "Mathilde and Lucie arrived safely." This was the first intimation they had received that I had left the Zambesi, and three weeks later I was with them at our home in New Vale, in the Orange Free State, where I found my dear little Florrie. At that time there were no trains to Palapye, so I went by coach to Magalabye, and by goods train to Gaberones, where I stopped two or three days with Mrs. Surmen, the magistrate's wife. It was two o'clock in the morning when we arrived there, and as there was no real station, but only a few tents, and no one to meet us, Lucie, the three

Barotsi boys and myself spent the rest of the night under a tree. When morning came I sent a boy to Mrs. Surmen, to let her know of my arrival, and soon her cart came for us. Then on by train we went to Kimberley, where I spent four delightful days with Mrs. Duncan, an old school friend. Much refreshed by this restful stay, I proceeded to Bloemfontein, where my sister's cart was waiting for me, and a few hours from New Vale my two sisters met me in the veld. I must leave you to imagine the rest. Words fail me as I think of the greeting at New Vale and the joy I had in seeing my little Florette again. It was a year since I had seen her, and she had grown so much. She did not recognise me, she started toward me, but thinking I was a stranger she turned and ran to her aunt. There were so many old friends to greet me, and together we praised God for His good hand upon us all the way.

It was eight months after my husband's death when I left our dear station—our Sesheke—where we had hoped to serve God

many years. Seven years were but short, and the work was only just begun. A little seed had commenced to grow and we would have so much liked to see also the flower and the fruit. But the Lord had decided differently. He had taken to Himself His servant, and I had been compelled to return home, but I still love the work so much. It is hard to think that I am put aside, and when I think of the work waiting to be done I feel eager and impatient to be in the midst of it once more. One who has had the "African fever" never gets over it, I believe. It is wonderful how one can learn to love the poor black people. It is the love that comes from God. I have been a missionary, and a missionary I still want to be. But I know that it is not at present God's will that I should be there. The Lord will Himself replace the soldiers who fall in the battle.

Let us pray for the mission work. Let us ask what seems difficult, or even impossible, to us, knowing that God is able to do far more than we can ask or think. The harvest

is great and there are but few labourers. May a new zeal burn in our hearts and may our firm resolution be to see at last the accomplishment of our daily prayer,

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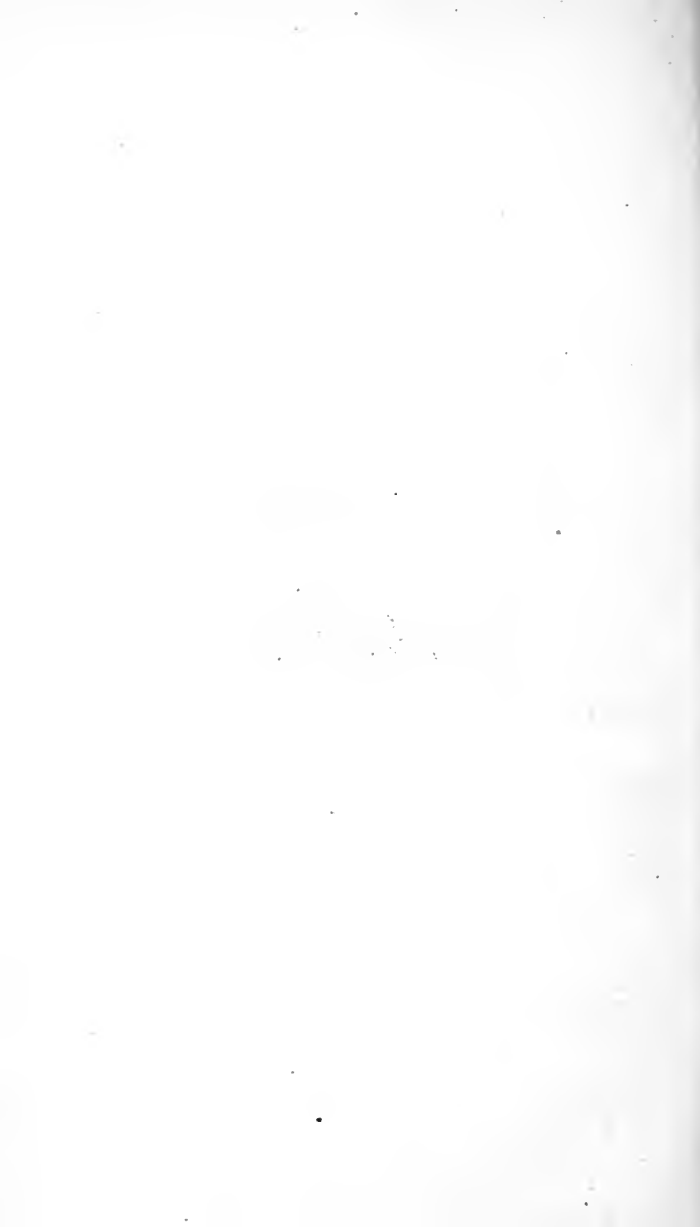
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